

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for managing real estate transactions over a distributed computer network comprising the steps of:
 - (a) storing data relating to a plurality of listings in a computerized database, each listing owned by an office, each office having a plurality of agents associated therewith, each office having a predefined region and at least one manager associated therewith;
 - (b) monitoring postings of transactions relating to the plurality of listings; and
 - (c) calculating commissions for the agents, the offices and the at least one manager associated with a transaction in accordance with a set of parameters.
- 5 2. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of storing data relating to advertising in the computerized database and calculating commissions for the offices based upon the data relating to the advertising.
- 10 3. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of storing data relating to vendors in the computerized database and calculating commissions for the agents and offices based upon the data relating to the vendors.
4. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of storing data relating to contacts in a computerized database, the contacts having agents associated therewith, wherein the contacts have listings associated therewith and the data relating to contacts includes a prefix, first name, last name and home phone number.
- 5 5. A method according to Claim 4, further comprising the steps of preventing deletion of a contact associated with an external business object and allowing only the agent associated with the contact to view and edit the data relating to the contact.

6. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of allowing the plurality of agents to initiate open house requests and advertising requests.

7. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of storing data relating to agents in the computerized database, the data relating to agents including status, first name, last name and phone numbers, wherein the agents have at least one title associated therewith, the at least one title selected from the group consisting of agent, sales manager and office manager.

8. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to the predefined regions used to set agent's commission split levels, whereby the agent's commission split levels determine an agent split percentage based on agent earnings, wherein the agent's commission split level has a first level equal to zero and a ceiling split level equal to a prior level's ceiling plus one unless the ceiling split level is the first level.

9. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to the predefined regions in a computerized database, the data relating to regions including field selected from the group consisting of a created by field, a date of creation field, a last changed by field and a last changed date field.

10. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to offices in a computerized database, each agent being assigned to only one office, the data relating to offices including a status selected from the group consisting of incomplete, open and closed, wherein the data relating to the offices includes an office identifier, an office name, an office address, a system identifier, an accounting identifier and a region identifier, wherein the data relating to the offices includes a monthly sales goal, an office listing goal, a referral goal and an earnings goal.

11. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to the listings in the computerized database, the data relating to the listings including an address, a city, a state, a zip code, a seller identifier, a listing

agent, a list date, an expiration date, a list price, a total commission and a listing type,
5 wherein the listing type determines which contracts are printed, wherein the contracts
are selected from the group consisting of exclusive right to sell, open agency and
exclusive agency.

12. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the commissions are based
upon flat fees and percentages, the percentages being between one percent and fifteen
percent and the flat fee being greater than zero and less than a selling price for the
listing.

13. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the data relating to the plurality
of the listings includes a listing status, wherein the listing status is selected from the
group consisting of open, under contract, closed and canceled.

14. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising storing data relating
to sale transactions in a computerized database, the sale transactions consisting of
contracts for contacts to purchase listings associated with the real estate company,
wherein the data relating to the sale transactions includes an address, a multiple listing
5 system identifier, at least one listing agent, at least one buyer and at least one seller,
wherein a maximum of five listing agents and five buyers can be entered in the
computerized database.

15. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the commissions for the agents
are based upon parameters selected from the group consisting of selling price, splits
agreed upon between a listing agent and a selling agent, commission splits for agents
based upon earning schedules and a marketing adjustment.

16. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the commissions for the at
least one manager are based upon parameters selected from the group consisting of
agent commissions, a predefined period of time and predetermined percentages per
office based upon the predefined region and the predefined period of time, wherein
5 when the sale transactions are posted, the commissions for the agent are updated
accordingly, wherein when posting the sale transactions, a listing side commission is

posted before a selling side commission, the commissions for the agent being recalculated before posting the selling side commission.

17. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

(d) tracking trustee money deposited and disbursed from the transactions, wherein each of an action date, a type, a deposit, a disbursement and a received from payee field must be entered into the database to facilitate tracking the trustee money; 5 and

(e) tracking a created by field, a created date field, a last changed by field and a last changed date field for each trustee associated with the trustee money.

18. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of maintaining data relating to attorneys in a computerized database; and

entering a name, a firm, an address and a business phone number for each attorney, wherein the data relating to the attorneys can be edited by the at least one 5 manager and a predetermined administrator.

19. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to referrals in a computerized database, the referrals being used to calculate the commissions, wherein an agent has initiated multiple referrals for a contact, each of the multiple referrals set to a predetermined percentage according to 5 office guidelines.

20. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

(d) maintaining data relating to relocation clients in a computerized database, the relocation clients being external companies that an office partners with for managing corporate relocations, wherein the data relating to relocation clients includes 5 a client identifier, a client name, an address, a phone number, a default percentage and a maximum percentage; and

(e) providing the ability to search for a relocation client.

21. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to multiple listing services in a computerized database, the

data relating to the multiple listing services including a name to allow searching and matching of fields.

22. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 - (d) maintaining data relating to contact activities in a computerized database, the contact activities including a thank you letter, a survey and a targeted mailing advertisement; and
 - 5 (e) entering a batch job identifier, a contact identifier, an activity date and a job type identifier for each of the contact activities.
23. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to lockboxes in a computerized database, the data relating to the lockboxes indicating activity for the lockboxes assigned to one of the plurality of the listings.
24. A method according to Claim 23, further comprising the steps of entering as part of the data relating to lockboxes a lock box number, an issued to agent, an issue date, a return date and comments relating to the lockboxes; and assigning the lockboxes to one of the listings at a time, allowing only a 5 valid agent to sign out a lockbox and requiring a previous lockbox to be marked as returned before a subsequent lockbox can be issued.
25. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to advertising copy in a computerized database, the advertising copy being used for placing advertisements relating to the listings.
26. A method according to Claim 25, further comprising the step of limiting an ad copy record to association with one of the plurality of listings, the ad copy record being part of the data relating to the advertising copy and including ad copy fields selected from the group consisting of a one liner field, a short copy field, a long copy 5 field and a home show field, wherein any of the ad copy fields can be empty.
27. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

5 maintaining data relating to sign vendors in a computerized database, the sign vendors being companies that tend to a sign on a listing, wherein the data relating to the sign vendors is selected from the group consisting of a name, an address, a preferred method of communication, communication data and a vendor identifier;

allowing only the at least one manager to request installation and removal of the signs; and

10 allowing the at least one manager to approve of advertising requests submitted by the agents, wherein the advertising request must be for a listing associated with an agent who submitted the advertising request.

28. A method according to Claim 27, wherein the advertising request is initiated because of an open house request, a link to an open house identifier is associated with the advertising request.

29. A method according to Claim 27, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to advertising placements in a computerized database, the advertising placements being used by the at least one manager to organize the advertising requests for placement in advertising media, where advertising media are selected from the group consisting of television, newspapers, magazines and brochures.

5 30. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to showing the plurality of the listings in a computerized database, the data relating to showings is an audit trail of all showings for each of the plurality of the listings and is available over the Internet to a contact who owns a listing, wherein the data relating to the showings is selected from the group consisting of a date, a time, an activity type, a comment by an agent, an entry date, a changed date and a comment by the contact.

5 31. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of scheduling appointments for the plurality of the listings in a computerized database, the appointments being for a listing agent and a cobroker to show a listing, wherein fields entered for appointments are selected from the group consisting of a date, a time, an agent, an agency, an agent phone and a remark.

32. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining data relating to outgoing referrals in a computerized database, the outgoing referrals representing contacts who become buyers and sellers through an external relocation company, wherein the commissions are posted based upon the outgoing referrals yielding transactions.

33. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of: capturing responses to surveys in a computerized database, the surveys relating to the transaction.; and updating nightly data relating to pending sale transactions in a computerized database in order to accurately predict future cash flows for the office.

34. A system for managing real estate transactions over a distributed computer network comprising:

- (a) means for storing data relating to a plurality of listings in a computerized database, each listing owned by an office, each office having a plurality of agents associated therewith, each office having a predefined region and at least one manager associated therewith;
- (b) means for monitoring postings of transactions relating to the plurality of listings; and
- (c) means for calculating commissions for the agents, the offices and the at least one manager associated with a transaction in accordance with a set of parameters.

35. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for storing data relating to advertising in the computerized database and calculating commissions for the offices based upon the data relating to the advertising.

36. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for storing data relating to vendors in the computerized database and calculating commissions for the agents and offices based upon the data relating to the vendors.

37. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for storing data relating to contacts in a computerized database, the contacts having agents

associated therewith, wherein the contacts have listings associated therewith and the data relating to contacts includes a prefix, first name, last name and home phone number.

5 38. A system as recited in Claim 37, further comprising means for preventing deletion of a contact associated with an external business object and means for allowing only the agent associated with the contact to view and edit the data relating to the contact.

39. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for allowing the agents to initiate open house requests and advertising requests.

40. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for storing data relating to agents in the computerized database, the data relating to agents including status, first name, last name and phone numbers, wherein the agents have one title associated therewith, the title selected from the group consisting of agent, sales manager and office manager.

5 41. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to regions used to set agent's commission split levels, whereby the agent's commission split levels determine an agent split percentage based on agent earnings, wherein the agent's commission split level has a first level equal to zero and a ceiling split level equal to a prior level's ceiling plus one unless the ceiling split level is the first level.

42. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to regions in a computerized database, the data relating to regions including field selected from the group consisting of a created by field, a date of creation field, a last changed by field and a last changed date field.

43. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to offices in a computerized database, each agent being assigned to only one office, the data relating to offices including a status selected from the group consisting of incomplete, open and closed, wherein the data relating to the

5 offices includes an office identifier, an office name, an office address, a system identifier, an accounting identifier and a region identifier, wherein the data relating to the offices includes a monthly sales goal, an office listing goal, a referral goal and an earnings goal.

44. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to the listings in the computerized database, the data relating to the listings including an address, city, state, zip code, seller identifier, listing agent, list date, expiration date, list price, total commission and listing type, wherein the 5 listing type determines which contracts are printed, wherein the contracts are selected from the group consisting of exclusive right to sell, open agency and exclusive agency.

45. A system as recited in Claim 34, wherein the commissions are based upon flat fees and percentages, the percentages being between one percent and fifteen percent and the flat fee being greater than zero and less than a selling price for the listing, respectively.

46. A system as recited in Claim 34, wherein the data relating to the plurality of the listings includes a listing status, wherein the listing status is selected from the group consisting of open, under contract, closed and canceled.

47. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for storing data relating to sale transactions in a computerized database, the sale transactions consisting of contracts for contacts to purchase listings associated with the real estate company, wherein the data relating to the sale transactions includes an address, a 5 multiple listing system identifier, at least one listing agent, at least one buyer and at least one seller, wherein a maximum of five listing agents and five buyers can be entered in the computerized database.

48. A system as recited in Claim 34, wherein the commissions for the agents are based upon parameters selected from the group consisting of selling price, splits agreed upon between a listing agent and a selling agent, commission splits for agents based upon earning schedules and a marketing adjustment.

49. A system as recited in Claim 34, wherein the commissions for the at least one manager are based upon parameters selected from the group consisting of agent commissions, a predefined period of time and predetermined percentages per office based upon the predefined region and the predefined period of time, wherein 5 when the sale transactions are posted, the commissions for the agent is updated accordingly, wherein when posting the sale transactions, a listing side commission is posted before a selling side commission, the commissions for the agent being recalculated before posting the selling side commission.

50. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising:

- (d) means for tracking trustee money deposited and disbursed from the transactions, wherein each of an action date, a type, a deposit, a disbursement and a received from payee field must be entered into the database to facilitate tracking the 5 trustee money; and
- (e) means for tracking a created by field, a created date field, a last changed by field and a last changed date field for each trustee associated with the trustee money.

51. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to attorneys in a computerized database and means for entering a name, a firm, an address and a business phone number for each attorney, wherein the data relating to the attorneys can be edited by the at least one manager and 5 a predetermined administrator.

52. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to referrals in a computerized database, the referrals being used to calculate the commissions, wherein an agent has initiated multiple referrals for a contact, each of the multiple referrals set to a predetermined percentage according to 5 office guidelines.

53. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising:

- (d) means for maintaining data relating to relocation clients in a computerized database, the relocation clients being external companies that an office partners with for managing corporate relocations, wherein the data relating to relocation

5 clients includes a client identifier, a client name, an address, a phone number, a default percentage and a maximum percentage; and

(e) means for providing the ability to search for a relocation client.

54. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to multiple listing services in a computerized database, the data relating to the multiple listing services including a name to allow searching and matching of fields.

55. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising:

(d) means for maintaining data relating to contact activities in a computerized database, the contact activities including a thank you letter, a survey and a targeted mailing advertisement; and

5 (e) means for entering a batch job identifier, a contact identifier, an activity date and a job type identifier for each of the contact activities.

56. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising:

means for maintaining data relating to lockboxes in a computerized database, the data relating to the lockboxes indicating activity for the lockboxes assigned to one of the plurality of the listings; and

5 means for entering as part of the data relating to lockboxes a lock box number, an issued to agent, an issue date, a return date and comments relating to the lockboxes.

57. A system as recited in Claim 56, further comprising means for assigning the lockboxes to one of the listings at a time, allowing only a valid agent to sign out a lockbox and requiring a previous lockbox to be marked as returned before a subsequent lockbox can be issued.

58. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to advertising copy in a computerized database, the advertising copy being used for placing advertisements on the listings.

59. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for limiting an ad copy record to association with one of the listings, the ad copy record being part

of the data relating to the advertising copy and including ad copy fields selected from the group consisting of a one liner field, a short copy field, a long copy field and a 5 home show field, wherein any of the ad copy fields can be empty.

60. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising:

means for maintaining data relating to sign vendors in a computerized database, the data relating to the sign vendors being companies that tend to a sign on each of the plurality of the listings, wherein the data relating to the sign vendors is 5 selected from the group consisting of a name, an address, a preferred method of communication, communication data and a vendor identifier and

means for allowing only the at least one manager to request installation and removal of the signs.

61. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for allowing the at least one manager to approve of advertising requests submitted by the agents, wherein the advertising request must be for a listing associated with an agent who submitted the advertising request.

62. A system as recited in Claim 61, wherein the advertising request is initiated because of an open house request, a link to an open house identifier is associated with the advertising request.

63. A system as recited in Claim 61, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to advertising placements in a computerized database, the advertising placements being used by the at least one manager to organize the advertising requests for placement in advertising media, where advertising media are 5 selected from the group consisting of television, newspapers, magazines and brochures.

64. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to showing the plurality of the listings in a computerized database, the data relating to showings is an audit trail of all showings for each of the plurality of the listings and is available over the Internet to a contact who owns a 5 listing, wherein the data relating to the showings is selected from the group consisting

of a date, a time, an activity type, a comment by an agent, an entry date, a changed date and a comment by the contact.

65. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for scheduling appointments for the plurality of the listings in a computerized database, the appointments being for a listing agent and a cobroker to show a listing, wherein fields entered for appointments are selected from the group consisting of a date, a time, an agent, an agency, an agent phone and a remark.

66. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising means for maintaining data relating to outgoing referrals in a computerized database, the outgoing referrals representing contacts who become buyers and sellers through an external relocation company, wherein the commissions are posted based upon the outgoing referrals yielding transactions.

67. A system as recited in Claim 34, further comprising:
means for capturing responses to surveys in a computerized database,
the surveys relating to the transaction; and
means for updating nightly data relating to pending sale transactions in a
5 computerized database in order to accurately predict future cash flows for the office.

68. A distributed computer network for managing real estate transactions comprising:
a memory containing:
a data tier program having functions for supporting a
5 database for storing data relating to a plurality of contacts;
a web tier program having functions for managing requests for said data relating to the plurality of contacts and providing said data relating to the plurality of contacts to a plurality of agents;
a client tier program having functions for providing
10 remote access to the database by said plurality of contacts and said plurality of agents;

a business tier program having functions for retrieving and storing said data relating to a plurality of contacts and applying business rules to said data relating to a plurality of contacts in order to generate a report; and

15 a processor for implementing the web tier program, the client tier program, the business tier program and the data tier program in order to manage real estate transactions.

69. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a distributed computer system to perform a remote procedure, the distributed computer system having a client program and a server program with functions for invocation, by performing the steps of:

5 (a) storing data relating to a plurality of listings in a computerized database, each listing owned by an office, each office having a plurality of agents associated therewith, each office having a predefined region and at least one manager associated therewith;

10 (b) monitoring postings of transactions relating to the plurality of listings;

and

10 (c) calculating commissions for the agents, the offices and the at least one manager associated with a transaction in accordance with a set of parameters.